



Zion Farmers Market Veg-u-cation

Pretty, Tasty



Cooking with edible flowers is back. Not that it ever really went to seed, mind you. In fact, the practice has been around since the days of Julius Caesar.

Fast forward almost two thousand years to the blossom-loving reign of Queen Victoria and the flower-power days of the '60s, and you'll see that *fleurs* have been a perennial gastronomic delight for ages. Gelatin-encased pansies, anyone?

Here, in time for your summer parties, is our A-to-Z guide to the 10 best edible florets. Whether sprinkled on a salad, incorporated into a cocktail or ice cubes, or candied for a cake, these blooms promise to add an ambrosial touch to your seasonal entertaining.



BORAGE BLOSSOMS

These beautiful blue, star-shaped flowers from the borage plant taste a bit like cucumber, which is why they've been used in salads like this one since The Elizabethan Age. They are also delicious in lemonade and refreshing cocktails like Pimm's Cup and gin and tonic.

CALENDULA

Known as the "poor man's saffron," the sunset-hued marigold flower really does taste like saffron when it's sautéed in olive oil to release its flavor. Uncooked marigold petals have a more subtle, slightly spicy taste and add depth to deviled eggs.

ZUCCHINI BLOSSOMS

The bright yellow flowers of the courgette or zucchini plant have a delicate and slightly sweet taste. Enjoy them the classic way—stuffed with herbs and goat cheese—or on a pizza for a summertime favorite.

HIBISCUS

Both tart and sweet, hibiscus petals have a cranberry-like flavor that makes them perfect for teas and cocktails. Drop fresh hibiscus buds into glasses of bubbly and let your guests watch them bloom before their eyes.

LAVENDER

Sweet and slightly perfumed-tasting, lavender works well when the buds are sprinkled in champagne and cocktails and over desserts like chocolate cake. Or try it in a lavender peach crisp served with vanilla ice cream.

NASTURTIUMS

These gorgeous flowers have a slightly peppery taste, almost like watercress, which makes them perfect for summer rice paper rolls. You can also stuff a whole flower with a savory mousse or enjoy nasturtium flowers with beef carpaccio.

PANSIES

Pansies have a slightly grassy—even minty—flavor, so they work well in herb-flavored summer cocktails and fruit salads. For a quick, easy, and festive summer hors d'oeuvre, spread some cream cheese on a small round cracker and top it with a whole pansy.

ROSES

While roses have a strong floral scent, their flavor is quite subtle and fruity. Roses lend themselves well to everything from soups and salads to teas, jams, and desserts.

SAGE FLOWERS

With their soft, yet sweet-savory flavor and beautiful color, sage flowers add dimension to a variety of dishes. For summer, pair them with lemon and other garden treats in a popsicle for a surprisingly refreshing treat.

VIOLETS

Violets, which come in a range of pastel and vibrant colors, have a sweet and floral taste, making them a perfect companion for everything from salads to iced drinks. They are particularly beautiful when crystallized and used to top frosted cakes and other desserts.



FLOWER PICKING TIPS

Be sure to avoid using flowers that have been sprayed with pesticides or other chemicals. Always purchase your edible flowers from the produce section of your grocery store or online sources.

FLOWER PREPPING TIPS

When cooking with or serving edible flowers, clean them by washing them gently in a large bowl of cold water and letting them air dry on a paper towel. Use them immediately or store them in the refrigerator for up to a week in an airtight container lined with a damp paper towel.